



CITY OF HOUSTON NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

July 11, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Frank Michel Office 713-247-2868/ Cell 713-412-8674

Patrick Trahan Office 713-437-6293/ Cell 713-417-4134

Mayor Bill White, Councilmembers Pam Holm & Anne Clutterbuck Collaborate with Bellaire & West University Place to Establish Railroad Quiet Zones in Residential Areas

Mayor Bill White today joined Councilmembers Pam Holm and Anne Clutterbuck and representatives of West University and Bellaire to finalize the long-sought federal declaration of railroad "quiet zones" in certain residential areas of the three cities.

"This agreement meets two of our biggest priorities, the safety of our citizens and the improvement of our neighborhoods," said Mayor White. "We've worked long and hard to make it happen."

"This project has been the culmination of several years of work," said District G Council Member Pam Holm, who has taken a lead on the project since 2004. "I appreciate the City of Bellaire and the City of West University Place contributed both financially and administratively to complete the Quiet Zone application to FRA standards."

To obtain the Quiet Zone designation, the cities' installed safety measures to prevent motorists and pedestrians from crossing the Union Pacific railway, running through the west side of Houston, while a train is passing. Each of the 14 crossings required different safety enhancements specific to each intersection. Once the designation is finalized, trains will not have to sound their horns while passing through the neighborhoods involved.

"We are proud that we have been able to improve citizens' safety and quality of life through this partnership between many entities," said District C Council Member Anne Clutterbuck.

The Quiet Zone application process requires comments and suggestions from the community and parties that use the railroad and consideration of their suggestions. Obtaining a Quiet Zone designation also must include strict adherence to federal safety requirements and to the implementation process outlined in FRA rules.

"The City of Bellaire is very excited to provide an improved quality of life for many Bellaire residents. We appreciate the leadership that the City of Houston has provided on this project," said Bellaire Mayor Cindy Siegel.

MORE

Bellaire City Manager Bernie Satterwhite and West University Place City Manager Mike Ross guided their respective cities through an interlocal agreement allowing the City of Houston to implement and maintain these safety improvements.

“The hard work of both Council Member Pam Holm and Mayor White strikes me as a model of collaboration to achieve a positive result for all communities involved,” said West University Place Mayor Burt Ballanfant.

The Quiet Zone will be officially in effect 21 days from receipt of the letter application signed by Mayor White. Quiet Zone improvements have taken place at the following crossings: San Felipe, Westheimer, Richmond, US 59 north and south service roads, West Park, Bissonnet, Bellaire, Beechnut, South Braeswood, IH 610 north and south service roads, West Bellfort and Willowbend.

#####